

SAF/LLZ (Legislative Research Team)

BERRY, Marion (Democrat)  
Representative, 1st District, Arkansas  
Elected 1996 to the 105th Congress  
Reelected to succeeding Congresses



### BACKGROUND

Born: Stuttgart, Arkansas - 27 August 1942  
Home: Gillett, Arkansas  
Marital status: Married (Carolyn) - 2 children  
Religion: Methodist  
Education: University of Arkansas, Little Rock, BS, 1965  
Military: None

Profession: Farmer; White House aide; pharmacist

Political: Gillett City Council, 1976-80; Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission, 1986-94, chairman, 1992. Elected in 1996 with 53% of the vote to succeed Rep Blanche Lambert Lincoln (D) who unexpectedly announced her retirement when she became pregnant with twins. Ran unopposed in 1998, reelected in 2000 with 59% of the vote and in 2002 with 67%.

Rep Berry is described as easy-going and fiscally conservative Democrat – a member of the so-called “Blue Dogs.” Focuses on protecting the interests of the soybean, cotton and rice farmers in his district and increasingly on health care issues such as managed care and prescription drugs. His district is the poorest in the State, which is one of the poorest in the Nation. Population and economy of Blytheville sagged after Eaker AFB closed in the early 1990’s.

In the 106th Congress, supported paying down the national debt. Supported extending Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China. Supported President Clinton's and NATO's decision to launch air strikes against the forces of Yugoslavia to bring a quick end to the humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo and to address the need for peace and security in the European Balkan region. In the 107th Congress, said it was time to do base closings again. Supported a study to determine whether the former Eaker AFB would be a good location for a national archaeological park which he believed would provide an important economic boost to the region. Expressed opposition to privatizing air traffic controllers. Original cosponsor of the Bioterrorism Preparedness Act. Appealed to the Sec/Def to have the Pine Bluff Arsenal selected as the site for a government-owned vaccine production laboratory.

At the beginning of the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress was assigned to the Appropriations Cmte, giving up seats on the Agriculture and Transportation Cmtes. Criticized US efforts to improve ties with Turkey, including an agreement permitting Turkey textile manufacturers to obtain US military contracts. Arkansas-based Bancroft Cap Company manufactures berets for the Army.

Member: C-130 Modernization Caucus, Army Caucus

AF Bases: None

### COMMITTEES

APPROPRIATIONS – Subcs on: Energy & Water Development; Homeland Security